2. All the porters have been paid their wages for the period of their employment. Payment in respect of porters who had deserted has been deposited with the treasury.

3. A compensation of Rupees two lakhs for the killed and Rupees 80,000/- for the injured is being processed.

Shortfall of Air squadrons

1392. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Asian Age dated 18th November, 1999 captioned 'IAF gives up Rs. 1500 crore due to Ministry's indecision';

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the action taken to wipe out the shortfall of air squadrons against the sanctioned strength of the Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) An amount only of Rs. 98.73 crore remained unutilised from the IAF Budget in the financial year 1998-99. The squadron strength of the IAF is adequate with the induction of new SU-30 aircraft.

Government are aware of the requirements of the IAF and are taking all necessary steps to meet them.

Development of High-Tech Surveillance Technology in Kargil

1393. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to enhanced threat perception, especially in Kargil sector, Government are thinking of deploying hi-tech satellite and aerial surveillance technology to detect enemy presence during winter-season;

(b) if so, whether the cost factor involving acquisition of surveillance technology and building the necessary infrastructure

would be met from existing budgetary outlays or would it entail further budgetary provision; and

(c) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Government are taking necessary steps to augment aerial surveillance capability in the sensitive border areas including Kargil.

(b) the cost will be met out of budgetary allocation.

(c) For reasons of national security it would not be desirable to reveal details in this regard.

Press briefing by Army Staff General

1394. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Army Staff General at the press briefing held during his recent visit to U.S.A. has made political statements on matters concerning Kashmir, Loc, Pakistan besides South Asian region, exceeding his brief and having far reaching political implications;

(b) if so, whether government have examined the statements made by Army Staff General at his press briefing in U.S.; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Chief of the Army Staff did not give any press briefing or make any political statements during his recent visit to the U.S.A.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

Indian prisoners of Kargil war in Pakistan

1395. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) How many Indian soldiers are still being kept in captivity of Pakistan as prisoners of war, since the Kargil conflict began;

(b) How many of them have been released so far by the Pakistani authorities, including those who were released through the intervention of the International Committee of Red Cross; and